



Bird's-eye view of the site for the Germantown Dry Reservoir before flood conservancy work began.

Spending Millions to Conserve Life and Property

By HOWARD EGBERT

PROPERLY to appreciate the magnitude of the flood prevention work now in progress in the low-lying Miami Valley in southern Ohio, a visit to the site of the work is necessary. It is the greatest bit of earthwork that has been accomplished in the United States. The estimate of the cost of the work is \$20,000,000. The time to be consumed in completing the work is estimated to be approximately three full years. The number of men required satisfactorily to bring to a conclusion this undertaking is close to three thousand—about 1,000 in engineering staff, heads of departments, etc.

But the thing is worth while. The disastrous flood of 1913, which swept this section of Ohio off the map, as well as damage aggregating \$200,000,000, had it not been destroyed utterly. No less than 7,000 lives were lost. Business was paralyzed for many months. Industry was crippled so

seriously that the faint-hearted among the thousands of citizens who make this valley their home, could see nothing ahead but continued misery.

The Miami Conservancy district was born amid the ruins of the flood. It was manifestly necessary to do something to redeem the thousands of square miles of fertile farm land and reconstruct business.

But movements of this nature are more easily launched than carried out, and the one outstanding feature that had to be considered was the raising of a vast sum of money to promote reconstruction labor.

Arthur E. Morgan, an engineer of national reputation, was first called into consultation and forthwith employed. Numerous plans were gone over, investigated

and thrown away. Traditional stories of floods in China, Japan, India and remote countries on the face of the earth, were carefully considered. Calamities in the United States along similar lines had to be considered. The character of the soil in the Miami Valley had to be studiously inquired into.

In the end Engineer Morgan's plan for a series of five retarding basins, or dry reservoirs, was adopted and the Conservancy directors went before the Ohio legislature and succeeded in having enacted a measure which guaranteed the right to proceed with the work.

Fifty thousand parcels of property had to be appraised for valuation in connection with the early part of the flood design.

Machinery had to be purchased on the open market, and in some instances it became necessary to traverse the snows of northern Michigan to find odd bits of mechanical equipment vital to the success of the quest.



This shows one of the large railroad cuts near the Hullman dam. Months of dredging and hard work were necessary to get the proper roadbed.